



Providing Resources and Support to Breast Cancer Patients Through Community Collaboration

Public Health Problem

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for Missouri women. In Missouri in 2002, an estimated 4,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer, and 800 died of breast cancer.

Evidence That Prevention Works

Timely mammography screening could prevent 15% to 30% of all deaths from breast cancer among women over the age of 40. Studies show that early detection is the best protection against breast cancer death. When breast cancer is diagnosed at a local stage, 96% of women still are alive 5 years later. If the cancer has spread regionally, this rate is reduced to 78% of women, and if diagnosed after spreading to distant sites, the 5-year survival rate is reduced to 21%.

Program Example

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) case managers collaborated with community organizations such as the Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks (BCFO) and the American Cancer Society to provide resources and support for women affected by breast cancer and their families. In one case, the BCCCP case manager acted as a liaison for Susan, a woman diagnosed with breast cancer who needed chemotherapy and a mastectomy. Susan was unemployed and depressed. The case manager helped Susan get in touch with the BCFO, who paid her rent and utilities for 3 months. The American Cancer Society provided a wig and other types of support. Susan has now completed her treatment and is doing well in her own home. She continues to express gratitude to the BCCCP for helping to save her life.

Implications

The Missouri BCCCP case management service enhances the quality of life of women diagnosed with breast cancer. By educating women on the scope of available services from diagnosis through treatment and recovery, the BCCCP helps increase the number of women who use the program and take advantage of the available diagnostic and treatment services.